



▲ Hardboard flooring

Specifying and installing sustainable fibreboard

Fibreboard subfloors

By Peter Jones | Managing director, Finnish Fibreboard (UK)

WHAT to look for when choosing a fabricated underlay.

A fabricated underlay is a wood-based panel which is applied to a subfloor/base/floating floor to provide a smooth, even surface in preparation for the installation of a floorcovering.

The demand for good quality fabricated underlays has soared over recent years, undoubtedly driven by the phenomenal rise in the popularity of resilient flooring.

Over many decades, fibreboard has been used as an underlay in the flooring sector, but just as resilient flooring has evolved, so too has Finnish Fibreboard, and this has resulted in the development and launch of a new high-density fibreboard product, which greatly surpasses the products of yesteryear.

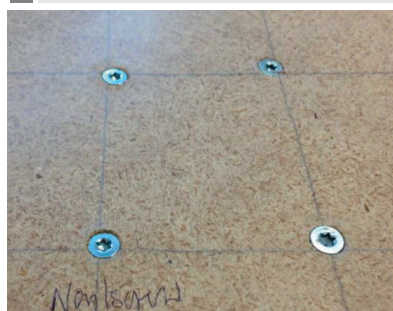
Specifying and installing sustainable fibreboard

The reason for the increased demand for an engineered fibreboard underlay is simple; LION Floor offers a cost-

effective alternative to a good quality flooring grade plywood, but without the common concerns surrounding plywoods eg core gaps, veneer overlaps, delamination issues, and of course the specifiers environmental concerns, surrounding the long-term sustainability issues of tropical hardwoods.

Popular demand for a homogenous high-density fibreboard fabricated underlay has sky-rocketed in recent years and this trend looks set to continue exponentially, which in part is owing to LION branded products green and unique sustainability

▼ Nail screws in LION Floor



credentials; see the latest CFJ Sustainability Guide for more details.

All our LION-branded products come from highly sustainable sources (predominantly PEFC-certified) and are in fact produced using the process by-products from timber saw mills in the immediate vicinity of our fibreboard mill.

There are so many elements to consider when designing a floor, in terms of practicality and aesthetics - and that's before you even start to consider how your chosen products will work together.

Should you use a plywood fabricated underlay, or would a homogenous, fully engineered wood-based panel, that guarantees no core gaps or veneer overlaps be a better solution?

Awareness of the system that lies beneath the flooring surface has to be built on two levels: a general comprehension of the reasons for using a fabricated underlay; and an understanding of the benefits that can be gained from using LION Floor as opposed to a plywood underlay.

Whereas in the past, installers would have to wet the fibreboard in order to condition the board prior to laying, today LION Floor is supplied pre-conditioned, so it has the same moisture content as a good quality plywood underlay - that's 8-10%, which means our fibreboard underlay can be treated in exactly the same way as a good quality flooring grade plywood system, but without many concerns commonly associated with plywood underlays.

International standards

The international standard for our boards is EN 622-2; while most readers of this article will be more focused on the UK's own and very recently updated BS 8203:2017.

These standards look at different issues, with the European norm focusing primarily on the criteria surrounding our manufacturing

▼ Annular ringshank nails in LION Floor





▲ LION Floor being used as a resilient flooring fabricated underlay in accordance with BS8203 2017

process and general characteristics and technical properties of the board, whereas BS8203:2017 focuses solely on the issues surrounding resilient flooring.

To meet the exacting criteria laid down by the new BS8203:2017, only two materials are recommended as suitable products for use as a fabricated underlay for resilient flooring. In order to satisfy BS8203 fibreboard must comply with EN622-2, and be of type HB.H (oil tempered), and as LION Floor is preconditioned (see section 7.3.1 of the new standard) it can be used in exactly the same way as a flooring grade plywood meeting the new stringent plywood requirements as laid down in BS8203:2017.

The new plywood requirements in BS8203, exclude the use of the vast majority of plywoods available on the UK market today, making LION Floor an attractive option.

BS8203 states in 6.3.1 that all timber bases (including wood based floating floors - see 6.5.1) should be covered with a suitable fabricated underlay, and fibreboard is the only homogenous engineered underlay approved in section 5.1.1. LION Floor has been specifically designed to meet the standards requirements and the demanding conditions of a resilient floor.

Sheet size – greater versatility/flexibility

As well as guaranteeing no core gaps, our homogenous engineered LION Floor product is available in 4.8mm thickness, which BS8203 compares with a 6mm (5.5mm nominal) flooring grade plywood and for those heavy-duty contracts, LION Floor is also available in a 6mm form.

LION Floor is roughly double the

▼ Truck on LION Protect



density of a good quality hardwood plywood meeting the new BS8203 standards, providing our product with superior impact resistance.

Unlike most flooring plywoods, LION Floor is available in a large variety of different panel sizes, enabling designers and contractors to ensure the floor surface is prepared with a minimum of waste, saving time and allowing greater opportunities to ensure underlay joints don't fall on flooring joints, which needs to be avoided as specified in BS8203:2017.

Installation

LION Floor is installed in exactly the same way as any good quality flooring grade plywood. This is detailed in BS8203:2017 in sections 6.7 and 7.3 which states all underlays should be at the equilibrium moisture content they have in service at the time they're covered.

When fixing, the best results are usually achieved using screw nails or ring shank nails. The length of the fixings should be at least 2.5 times the thickness of the underlay, but no longer than would allow them to protrude below the wood-based panel that they're being secured to. For detailed installation instructions, consult our latest installation guide.

Protection

David Attenborough and the BBC's Blue Planet series was attempting to deliver to us all a very important lesson; we must reduce our dependency on plastics! Despite this, the building industry continues to use tens of thousands of sheets of plastic temporary protection sheeting, when an environmentally friendly alternative already exists, that's also blessed with superior performance characteristics.

LION Protect meets the most demanding of requirements as detailed in BS8203:2017 section 7.6 and is produced in thicknesses from 2mm through to 6mm, and unlike it's plastic counterpart, is naturally slip resistant (greatly improving health and safety on sites) and owing to its very high density, provides vastly superior impact protection to the flooring.

The product is produced from highly sustainable timber process by-products, has no additives, and can be re-used numerous times.

At the end of its lifecycle, the product can be composted (its biodegradable), recycled or even burnt, saving on what can be very expensive specialised disposal costs for our plastic competitors, while of course helping to save our planet and reduce plastic waste.

CONTACT DETAILS

Finnish Fibreboard (UK)
01614 395969
sales@finfib.fi
peter.jones@finfib.fi
www.finnishfibreboard.com

▼ Hardboard protection

